

administrative update

2016 SWAN/IL Summer Statewide Meeting
SWAN Prime Contract — www.diakon-swan.org

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Changes to PAE Matching

With feedback from agencies and families and with direction from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, the SWAN prime contract has been working to refine the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) matching formula to produce the best possible matches for children and families registered with PAE. Some of these updates include matching on the child's age based on the family preferences and distributing matching that may have a lower match score so that agencies are aware of the available families for registered children. Based on additional adjustments, families now will appear on matches for multiple children; thus, it is important that agencies, upon receiving a viable match, swiftly connect so that a match opportunity is not missed.

In the matching process, it is critical to have accurate information for waiting families and children. First and foremost, if a family has been matched already or is no longer interested in being matched, immediately email Dawn Sariano, PAE data analyst supervisor, at dsariano@diakon-swan.org to remove the family from the matching pool. You can close the family later through the SWAN Portal. This will save time and effort for everyone in the process and help make matches quickly.

A second very important clarifying step is to make sure that the age, gender, race and number of siblings the family is willing to accept are accurate. PAE will no longer match outside those guidelines.

Stay tuned for additional notification when we release these updates to the network. Your feedback is important to us, so upon release, please let us know if the matches are working for you.



EVENTS**2016 SWAN/IL
Fall Quarterly
Meetings**

Oct. 5, Scranton
Oct. 13, Enola
Oct. 19, Monroeville
Oct. 20, Clarion
Nov. 1, Philadelphia
Nov. 2, Lansdale

**2017 SWAN/IL
Winter Statewide
Meeting**

Jan. 18-19,
The Penn Stater
Hotel & Conference
Center,
State College

Affiliate Service Cost and Time Data

In January, Diakon/FDR released to SWAN affiliates a cost and time tracking utility on the SWAN Portal to help determine the affiliate cost and time efforts necessary to complete SWAN units of service. Collecting service cost and time data is a requirement of the 2015–2020 SWAN prime contract for all services referred on or after January 1, 2016.

Affiliates submitted their first quarter service cost and time data for January through March 2016, and they will submit the second quarter's data by the end of June. First quarter agency-specific data was shared with affiliates earlier this month. Be on the lookout for the second quarter reports to be released in early July.

These reports reveal time and travel cost data for each service referred to each agency since January 2016 and submitted as complete. As affiliates review this information, they should contact their SWAN technical assistants to address questions and update errant data as needed.

Please note that as a subsequent phase of the project implementation, the SWAN prime contract is working with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) to add capabilities to the tracking utility which will allow for the calculation of total costs for completed SWAN units. Since various aspects of the calculations are not yet complete or are subject to further consideration by DHS, the data affiliates received for the first quarter is not inclusive of total cost calculations. Once we complete this aspect of the project and receive approval from DHS, we may be in the position to share additional information in the future.

The SWAN prime contract is grateful for the affiliates' efforts in providing this data, which is key in informing DHS of efforts necessary to complete SWAN units of service.

Affiliate Contract Renewals Due

To all affiliate agencies: It is time to renew the purchase of service agreements between Diakon-SWAN LLC and the provider affiliate agencies. The state fiscal year 2016–2017 agreements were mailed to affiliate contract contacts in May. Agreements should be signed and returned to Diakon by June 30, 2016. We look forward to working with all of you again in the coming fiscal year!

Email the SWAN Helpline

It seems that one of the SWAN Helpline's best kept secrets is our email address: swanhelpline@diakon-swan.org. We are not sure why that is, but we hope to get the word out to everyone.

The SWAN Helpline email address can be used by people within SWAN, including caseworkers and families, as well as anyone who has a question for the Helpline or is interested in accessing SWAN services, such as Post-permanency services. Emails sent to this email address go to the entire Helpline staff and are answered promptly, usually within the same business day. Helpline can answer some questions through email, but in other cases, we will direct the person to call the Helpline number or provide a good time for Helpline staff to call them.

Helpline has special forms that we can email to families who are seeking Post-permanency services, so that the family can fill out the form on their own and email it back to the Helpline. The Helpline staff then submits a referral for the family for Post-permanency services based on the information provided. This service helps families who do not have the time to devote to doing a Post-permanency referral over the phone. It also helps families who are unable to call Helpline during our normal business hours. Some families find it easier to provide this sensitive information through email. Helpline understands that it can be difficult to make a call and share sometimes very emotional information.

Please give our email a try: swanhelpline@diakon-swan.org. You also can still call the SWAN Helpline at 800-585-7926. Our hours are Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Helpline has voicemail during our off-hours, or for when all of the technical specialists are on other calls. Our goal is to return emails and voicemail messages within one business day.

SWAN Service Referrals Should Continue

As the end of state fiscal year (SFY) 2015–2016 quickly approaches, some SWAN needs-based budget (NBB) dollars from this fiscal year are unspent. We encourage counties to continue making referrals for children and families who need services.

For referrals to be applied to the SFY 2015–2016 NBB, counties must submit them to the SWAN prime contract by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, June 30, 2016. Any referral received after this deadline will be held and processed in SFY 2016–2017.

If your county has exhausted its SWAN SFY 2015–2016 NBB dollars, do not stop referring. The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services has authorized reallocation of these funds among counties to maximize the use of these dollars. The SWAN prime contract will continue to process referrals received for SFY 2015–2016 until the NBB dollars are exhausted.

Statewide Support Group Listing

A list of family and teen support groups, including location, dates, times and contact person, is now available on the SWAN website at www.diakon-swan.org/supportgroup/. Please check to make sure your support group is listed. If you need to make any corrections or additions, please contact Post-permanency technical assistants Lea Moyer (LMoyer@diakon-swan.org) or Denise Sheffield (DSheffield@diakon-swan.org).

Website Updates Coming This Summer

The SWAN prime contract is making several updates to our website, www.diakon-swan.org. The following updates will be implemented this summer:

- On the Network Map page (www.diakon-swan.org/swan/network-map), when selecting a county name, the site lists the SWAN prime contract personnel associated with that county. The SWAN LSI coordinators are being added to these lists.
- On the Families - Support Groups page (www.diakon-swan.org/supportgroup/), the support-groups list is a PDF file. We plan to adjust so that the page is dynamic, sortable and filterable versus being displayed in a static PDF file.
- Within the Families page, we are creating a new page labelled Matching Events. This page will function much like the above referenced Support Groups page. In addition to SWAN prime contract matching events, this page will list the dates, contact info, and location of other network matching opportunities. These events would not be tied to our existing Events page but instead stand alone in the Families section to alert families of upcoming matching opportunities.
- A sliding banner is being added to the homepage and will highlight the most recent News and Events items.
- A link to the Family Design Resources, Inc. website is being added to navigation bar at the top of each page.
- The navigation of the Network Map is being adjusted. When clicking the **SWAN Network** link and then selecting a county, the navigation menu currently collapses after the Network Map page refreshes. The menu is being adjusted so that it will remain open to ease navigation.

Recent Matching Event Outcomes

Each year the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' Office of Children, Youth and Families is required to submit a report to the federal government about the value of matching events, and each year the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange and SWAN Helpline contact all those who attended them: families, county children and youth agencies and private adoption agencies. This year's matching event results have exceeded everyone's expectations.

Several years ago, studies suggested that the relationship between county and private adoption workers was more effective at selecting families for children than matching them based on family profiles. Anecdotally, the same appears to be true for matching events; more matches are made at matching events between workers than between workers and the families who attend.

Eleven children were matched with approved adoptive families as a result of the Matching Brunch held at the Summer Statewide Meeting on June 24, 2015. Of the 53 agencies in attendance, six were county agencies, and 37 families attended. This event was held in conjunction with the annual SWAN/Independent Living (IL) Permanency Conference in Lancaster.

At the 2016 SWAN/IL Winter Statewide Meeting in State College, 12 children were matched with approved adoptive families as a result of the Matching Dessert on January 20. Of the 56 agencies in attendance, two were county agencies, and 42 families attended.

The bottom line is that regardless of matching directly with the family or matching with a family through a private agency, matching events result in a significant number of matches and are well worth the effort to attend.

Update on Finalizations

During the third quarter of state fiscal year (SFY) 2015–2016 (January–March 2015), 283 children, including 27 older children (age 13 and older), completed the SWAN adoption finalization service.

SWAN Post-permanency services empower adoptive, permanent legal custodian, and formalized kinship families to stabilize and thrive. A recent SWAN study compared Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS) scores of 458 adopted children, including 149 older children, before and after receiving Post-permanency services. The study found that older children rated with "severe impairment" who were referred for SWAN Post-permanency services significantly decreased their impairment scores by 30 percent, from 127.4 points to 91.8 points ($p<0.0001$ at 0.05 significance level), following completion of Post-permanency services.

Child Recruitment Strategies — Have You Noticed?

If you access child records in the SWAN Portal, have you noticed the **Recruitment** link in the child search results? Have you clicked on it? Please try it out if you have not.

The **Recruitment** link opens a summary of the “recruitment strategies” completed thus far for a child, by date. These include, but are not limited to, registering a child on PAE, completing specific SWAN units of service, promoting children at matching opportunities, involving children in the Casey Permanency Roundtables and featuring children in available TV tapings across the state.

Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) coordinators present these strategies in their PAE 101 trainings, and the SWAN prime contract has begun tracking them to be sure all recruitment efforts are being made. When you are wondering what else you can do for a child, click the **Recruitment** link to see what has been tried recently. If a recent strategy occurred for a child or youth and is missing, let your PAE coordinator know so it can be added.

Currently the prime contract is working to find a consistent way to add information about enrollment in independent living and use of family findings activities to the SWAN Portal. If you have suggestions for obtaining this information and getting it into the record, please email Jane Johnston at jjohnston@diakon-swan.org.

Counties and affiliates, reach out to your PAE coordinators and SWAN regional technical assistants, respectively, for more details about these vital recruitment opportunities that can expedite permanency for waiting children.

The SWAN LSI INCARCERATION RESOURCE MANUAL Is Available Now!

The Incarceration Resource Manual is a tool to assist caseworkers and supervisors in their case planning with incarcerated parents and for SWAN LSI paralegals as they support the counties’ efforts to engage with these parties. It contains entries for each Pennsylvania county prison, appendices with more detailed information and links to county prison websites.

Download it at www.diakon-swan.org

Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)
Legal Services Initiative (LSI)

INCARCERATION RESOURCE MANUAL



A case-planning tool to help achieve better outcomes for children in the child welfare system with incarcerated parents



Using the Juvenile Inventory for Function

The Juvenile Inventory for Function (JIFF) is the preferred assessment tool for use in the SWAN Post-permanency Assessment. The May Post-permanency Units of Service meeting included a discussion of the importance and value of using the tool. The JIFF gives youth a voice in this process, enabling them to share suicidal thoughts, drug use and bullying — when they may not have shared this information with an adult. While the JIFF is primarily for youth age 11 and older, if the youth cannot or will not complete the questionnaire, the JIFF can still be completed for the caregiver.

Despite the many benefits of the JIFF, a SWAN review of JIFF usage shows this tool has been underutilized. In an effort to help affiliates increase their usage of the JIFF, SWAN Post-permanency technical assistants will follow up in situations where the JIFF could have been used but wasn't.

Because the JIFF requires internet access from a laptop, iPad or Android tablet, it must be completed in the home or any public space that offers Wi-Fi, such as a library, coffee shop or local fast food restaurant. The JIFF is most compatible with Internet Explorer, and a user account for the FAS Outcomes website (app.fasoutcomes.com) is also required for use. The website provides a training video and printable manual for the JIFF in the Overview section under the **First Time Users** link. Since the JIFF may be relatively new to many affiliate workers, it also may be helpful to highlight some of its features for new users.

If you have any questions about using the JIFF, please contact Post-permanency technical assistants Lea Moyer (LMoyer@diakon-swan.org) or Denise Sheffield (DSheffield@diakon-swan.org).

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